

LABOR

Throughout his public service, Mike has been a strong advocate for the rights of hard working families and communities. After high school graduation, Mike followed in the footsteps of his father and grandfather, gaining employment at the Great Northern Paper Company. He is a 29 year employee of GNP and is a member of the United Steelworkers of America. Mike continues to champion labor causes to ensure that Maine's many hard working families receive the respect, recognition and just compensation that they deserve.

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Additional resources:

- U.S. Department of Labor
- Maine Department of Labor

Advancing Workers' Rights & Advocating for Better Wages, Benefits, and Working Conditions

As a card-carrying union member, Mike believes in protecting a worker's right to organize. Workers in Maine and throughout the country see unions as defenders of their rights, counting on labor unions for support, job stability, and security.

Mike supports legislation that would better enable unions to represent their members. He voted for the "Employee Free Choice Act," which passed the House in the 110th Congress with bi-partisan support. He is an original cosponsor of the Employee Free Choice Act in the 111th Congress, and considers it part of a broader goal to strengthen America's middle class and enable workers to bargain for better wages, benefits, and working conditions. Despite misleading claims, it does not take away the secret ballot.

Mike also cosponsored the Employer-Employee Cooperation Act, which passed the House with overwhelming support. This legislation guarantees the rights of firefighters, police officers, and emergency medical service workers in all 50 states to collectively bargain for better wages, benefits and working conditions and to establish and join recognized unions.

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Securing Unemployment Benefits for the Jobless

Mike believes in this difficult economic climate it is imperative to extend unemployment insurance (UI) benefits for those who have lost their jobs. He voted to extend UI in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act as well as in the Jobs for Main Street Act and appropriations bills. The economic downturn has left tens of thousands of Mainers without employment, and UI helps these individuals support their families until they find new jobs. Unemployment benefits are a critical lifeline for these individuals, and they are a good investment for the American taxpayer. For every \$1 spent on UI, \$1.64 is generated in economic demand. These benefits are critical to helping our economy recover and extending them for as long as necessary will remain a top priority for Mike.

- House Extends Unemployment and Health Benefits; Michaud Urges Swift Senate Action (12/18/09)

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Ensuring Safety in the Workplace

One of the keys to having a productive workplace and satisfied workers is ensuring the highest possible level of workplace safety possible to protect workers and the products produced. Mike has worked to ensure the health of the American workforce through his support of the Healthy Families Act, which would require certain employers to provide minimum paid sick leave.

In addition, he is a cosponsor of Protecting America's Workers Act, H.R. 2067, which makes significant changes to the Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA). This legislation would expand OSHA's coverage to include state and local public employees, federal government workers, and millions of other workers who are inadequately covered by other laws.

A safe and healthy workplace is not solely the right of the American workforce, but is an absolute necessity all across the world. To ensure universal worker safety measures are established, Mike joined with Republican Congressman Chris Smith in authoring the Decent Worker's Condition Act. This bipartisan legislation would stop the widespread violation of universal labor standards in substandard workplaces such as sweatshops. The Decent Worker's Condition Act would ban

the importation or exportation of any product produced in a sweatshop or in a forced labor camp.

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Promoting Fair Compensation

Mike has been a strong supporter of several bills that aim to ensure that all Americans receive fair and just pay. At the onset of the 110th Congress, Mike joined 220 of his colleagues in co-sponsoring H.R. 2, the Fair Minimum Wage Act of 2007. Until 2007, hard-working Americans earning minimum wage had not received a pay raise in a decade. Since the bill became public law, the federal minimum wage has been raised from \$5.15 per hour to \$7.25 an hour giving many of our nations hardest workers the pay raise that they deserve and additional income that they need to provide for their families.

Mike has also supported legislation that seeks to eliminate discrimination and inequality between the salaries of men and women. Mike supported the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act, which would overturn a Supreme Court ruling that makes it harder for workers to pursue pay discrimination claims. The bill stipulates that every paycheck resulting from an earlier discriminatory pay decision constitutes a violation of the Civil Rights Act. The legislation provides employees who are victims of discrimination of up to two years of back pay. It became law on January 29, 2009. To find out more about the bill, [click here](#).

In order to ensure that women receive equal pay, Mike also supported H.R. 12, the Paycheck Fairness Act. The bill closes the loopholes that have allowed employers to avoid responsibility for discriminatory pay, holds businesses responsible for discriminatory practices, and establishes a new grant program to help strengthen the negotiation skills of girls and women. The bill passed the House on January 9, 2009 and currently awaits action in the Senate.

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Working for Fair Labor Standards in Trade

One way to protect American workers is to ensure that our trade policies do not encourage American companies to offshore their work to countries that do not uphold American labor standards. Mike believes all U.S. free trade agreements must include a requirement that countries implement in their domestic law the International Labour Organisation's Convention (ILO) standards. The TRADE Act, Mike's legislation to establish a fair U.S.

trade policy, would prohibit our trading partners from waiving core ILO labor standards on minimum wages, hours of work, and occupational safety. Requiring all of our free trade partners to include in their laws the ILO Convention standards would be a historic accomplishment for international worker rights and is a key part of Mike's efforts to promote fair trade. To read more about Mike's efforts on trade, [click here](#).

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